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O Mdahrag! put the saddle on my gray camel,
Tighten the saddle on the riding camel.
Heaven avert the evil omen, but how disastrous art
thou, night!
For thou hast pierced my entrails in many places.
I complain to thee, my little sister Dwejle,
For your kin have urged their camels elsewhere.

The lover rode out at night to call on his sweetheart. Her kin were moving that very day and intended to pitch their tents at a certain place. There the lover went when darkness set in, but the camp was not there, his sweetheart's people had moved to another place.

[754] Mdahrag was a negro or a Bedouin serving as *fedāwi*, free servant, with the lover. *Ša'ejle* is a light-gray she-camel. The word *aḵṣar* (fem., *ḵašra*), disastrous, should not be used, as it might provoke the demon to do the speaker harm; therefore *al-'afw*, pardon, is added. Dwejle was the name of his beloved, whom he addresses as his little sister. *Hajjān* means kin, *ahl*, with whom the maiden is camping. *Rādi* (or *rād*) is an object lying elsewhere, either further on or in an unexpected direction.

Jā-l-fedne w-edni lana khejle
'an direten mā biha ḡāze
emši w-ana mraṭijjat al-bāl
w-atli-l-aḡānib min al-'āze
šaffi rrēwen ma' al-ḥajjān
w-min al-ḥala jinkol hrāzeh.

O Fedne! bring us the *khejle* mare;
I desire to leave the land of ill luck,
To leave with a mind distressed,
And of necessity to follow the strangers.
I wish for my darling to camp with my kinsfolk,
Then he would carry away all the sweetness he could hold.

The lover camps far away, so that the maiden cannot meet him. Therefore she wants to escape on a mare of the *khejle* breed to another clan, where the loved youth is probably serving as a *fedāwi*. *Šaffi* is equivalent to *šahwati*, my desire, my longing.

852 to Sita's kinsmen for remaining calm in danger and for their
 539* bravery and generosity, because they put food on the pan,
ṣaḥn, before their guests.

Jā ṣita meḥzemeč ṣebri. O Sita, splendid is thy belt,
'alejh min ad-dahab ṣebri. Which is gilded a span wide.

[292] The daughters and wives of the powerful chiefs wear over
 their dress, *ṭawb*, as a rule, a belt of wool or silk interwoven
 with gold or silver threads.

Ġemal ṣita šaba-l-maṭlā'
ḡa'al min tabrozeh tenlā'
jamūt wlódaha-r-rzā'.

Sita's camel climbed a summit,
 O Allāh! grant that she who looks angrily at it may
 lose her color,
 And that her baby boy whom she nurses may die.

Šaba' al-maṭlā' means that a camel carrying a pretty litter
 climbed a height; thus the litter projected above the horizon
 and was visible from afar. The Bedouins think that an angry
 envious look can do man even deadly harm, and, therefore, that
 a woman who looks at Sita's camel in that manner should be
 punished by Allāh. *Tenlā'* means a woman who grows extremely
 thin and loses her healthy color. A *wléd*, baby boy, is preferred
 by a mother to a girl, because he adds and will yet add to
 the esteem she enjoys in the tent. In losing him, her life's
 happiness is often lost. She is then divorced by her husband
 and may have to wait long before finding another, owing to
 the fear that an evil spirit is after her.

Jā mohra šidat Oh, that little mare, which was being led
min bēn nazlēni Between the two camps!
karwādha ḡāled She was led by Ḥāled,
lā jā ba'ad 'ēni. Oh, that I may look long at him!

Mohra means in this case the young wife of Ḥāled, the
 son of the late Prince Saṭṭām; her relatives were camping
 not far off on the wedding day.

Jā bakraten ḥorra
jā maṣṣaha zaṣzāf

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791 the *munābi* is to appear. They come to the seer on Thursday
 756 night, accompany him on his visits to the sick and on raids,
 and join him whenever he commands them. One part of their
 duty is to carry little drums and other musical instruments,
 [789] *dfūf w-šiš* or *dirbāš*. If the sorcerer wants to call the spokes-
 man-angel to him, he beckons to the disciples to play, while
 he himself squats with his head bent down. After a while he
 begins to move, stands up, stretches out his hands, jumps
 about, contorts his body, and puts his hands, feet, and even
 his head close to the fire, clapping his hands. The Bedouins
 say of this that he is just playing, *je'ab*, but his disciples
 call it yielding to the influence of the *islām*, ecstasy. When
 his enthusiasm reaches its climax, either Allāh's spokesman
 or some of the seer's ancestors appear on the scene. After
 the climax has subsided, the seer, greatly exhausted, com-
 plains that he can do nothing. The Bedouins, however, who
 cannot be made to believe that this ecstasy is a mere prep-
 aration for the angel's appearance, deride the sorcerer, im-
 itate his gestures, and call him one possessed and a juggler.
 Especially those of the new sorcerers whose ancestors were
 not known as seers are the target of their ridicule when
 trying to establish themselves. In this the Rwala are assisted
 by the acknowledged seers themselves, even by the new seer's
 temporary master. The new sorcerer is called *maṣṣi*, a fool;
maṣḍūf, bereft of reason; *ḥabel*, feeble-minded; *wāṣṣe'eh kej-*
farān, full of unbelief; *maṣḥūḥ*, drunk; *ma'rūz*, one possessed,
 etc. Should he declare something as the will of Allāh, all will
 laugh at him, for he could not learn anything from his an-
 cestors who were not seers themselves, and the speaking
 angel does not know him. Yet even if, after all, he achieves
 something extraordinary, they say he was helped by some
 spirit, *ḡānn*, and with such the sorcerers never associate.
 [555] However, by perseverance, patience, and courage a sorcerer-
 to-be in a few years will gain recognition not only from the
 Bedouins but from the hereditary sorcerers as well. The
 advance of such a sorcerer's son in his father's calling is,
 as a matter of course, much easier and speedier.

791 In defense of their honor the seers sometimes resort to
 754 curses. They are unable by their own strength to ruin the
 scoffers, but their ancestors and the spokesman-angel with
 whom they communicate will ask Allāh to punish those who
 dare to persecute them. These will die prematurely, their sons

791 will be slain, their herds perish. The chief *Ṣaḡr eben Meṣ-*
 754 *reb*, a famous leader of countless raids, was greatly incensed
 against both the sorcerers and their disciples because of their
 incessant greed and was once heard to say: "Oh, may Allāh
 rid me of you all! If you have enough, you disturb every-
 body's rest by your music and your foolery; if you are hungry,
 there is no being rid of you, you beggars; *low šeba'tu aw-*
dejtu w-low ġi'tu arzejtu." On hearing this the insulted sor-
 cerers called a meeting and one of them, *Mnāhi eben Dabbār*,
 cursed *Ṣaḡr* in the name of all present. A few days later the
 chief was dead.

789 Of the sorcerer's curse the Bedouins stand in much fear.
 782 If anybody hears that a seer has cursed him, he makes haste
 754 to find the seer and, falling on his face before the powerful
 man, crosses his hands behind his back as if fettered and
 says: "I ask the protection of thine ancestor and am willing
 to bring a lawful sacrifice as a gift to him, *ana dāhel 'ala*
ġeddekom w-ana hātt debihat ġeddekom mowhebbha mowhebe
šara'ijje." The sorcerer answers: "Agreed, it has arrived;
tāmma w-jāmma." The animal selected for the sacrifice is
 killed by the sorcerer at the edge of the tent, with its head
 turned south, while the sorcerer says: "O Allāh, this sacrifice
 is destined for my ancestor." Then he besmears with the
 blood of the sacrificed animal the center pole of the tent and
 the strip which strengthens its roof, (*arižet al-bejt*); the meat
 he and his disciples eat, and the accursed is relieved.

791 At the time when this was written (1909) the following
 persons were recognized as true seers: men: *Mnāhi eben Dab-*
bār, *Rannām eben Ġel'ūd*, *Ṣajjāh eben Ġlejdān*, *Za'al eben*
'Awwād; women: *'Ešba bint Hmezi*, *Baṭṭa bint 'Awwād*, and
Dlejjil bint Māxi.

787 A sorcerer can give information whether and for how
 791 long it is going to rain; whether a wife will bear a boy or
 a girl; whether the young produced by the mare or camel
 will be a male or a female; whether a raid will succeed, etc.

[726] War expeditions on a large scale are always accompanied
 by a sorcerer who instructs the commander in anything he
 may undertake. The latter asks the sorcerer's advice only on
 occasions when he is at a loss what to do. Then the seer
 stimulates himself with music and works himself into an ec-
 stasy, which helps him hear the angel speak and proclaim
 the will of Allāh.

791 back through the whole neighborhood, searching for the animals
 787 all day, but without avail, *ʿaḡaz*. Returning and saddling their
 camels in the evening, they began a new search, from which
 they did not return for fifteen days, *ḥanṣṭaʿaš waḡbe* (sic),
 again without finding a single trace of the flock. Then the
 owner decided to visit a soothsayer. Scattering her twenty-
 three objects on the ground before him, she said: "Hurry
 after thy flock with the wind, with the wind! Thou wilt find
 one half, thou wilt find the other half. Thou wilt find one
 after another." When the owner asked what was meant by
 these words, the woman put him off with the remark that
 she did not know. Returning to his tent, he related to his
 people what the soothsayer had told him. The air was perfectly
 quiet at that time, but suddenly a strong wind began to blow
 from the south-southwest, which gave one of the relatives an
 idea. "Allāh sends us a leader," said he, "let us follow him."
 And exactly at noon they set off north-northeast. About the
 middle of the afternoon, *ʿaṣeḡr*, they found a piece of the skin
 of the first sheep, which by a mark on its head the owner
 recognized as belonging to his flock. Before sunset they found
 the skin of a second and then of a third sheep with the same
 mark. All three sheep had been torn to pieces by wolves. Greatly
 fatigued with their long ride, they lay down to sleep. Continu-
 ing their search next morning, they found one dead sheep after
 another until they reached the pasturing ground of the Rfede
 kin, where they learned that, a few days before, one of their
 members named Hsejni had found seventy-five sheep wander-
 ing aimlessly in the vicinity. This was exactly the half of the
 lost flock, the other half having perished in the meantime.

SUPERNATURAL POWERS OF ŠLEJB WOMEN

764 The Rwala also believe that many women of the Šlejb
 tribe can exercise a good or bad influence. They are said to
 be able not only to awaken love, but also to smother it; to
 strengthen and also to destroy the faculty of begetting; to in-
 crease as well as to hinder the growth of children; to lengthen
 and shorten life, etc. No one knows if they have direct con-
 nections with evil spirits, but the people are inclined to believe
 so. Such women are called witches, *sahḥāra*, although none
 of them may be directly so called. Should that be proved of
 any Šlubijja, the Rwala would certainly kill her.

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About four years before my stay with the Rwala, a young Rwala chief fell in love with a beautiful young girl. The chief was already married and father of two boys, whom his healthy young wife had borne to him. Driven by jealousy, she went to a witch, *sahhâra*, complained of her husband, and begged the witch to prevent his taking a second wife but not to harm him. The witch asked her to bring a piece of the wool of a sheep killed on the day of her husband's new wedding and dip it into the blood of the sheep. At that time the Rwala were camping east of Damascus, where they could buy a sheep for their supper. The young wife promised to do as she was asked. When the sheep was killed before the chief's tent a little after noon, she tore out a bit of wool as if by accident, dipped it into the blood, and gave it to the Šlubijje. The witch pressed the wool with both her hands, mumbled strange words, and then returned it to the wife with instructions to take good care of it, to press it thoroughly, *temûşah*, every Friday night, and to continue doing so until the new wife was divorced by her husband. Cheered by this advice, the young wife gave a suitable reward to the Šlubijje, who was camping with some families of her kin on the outskirts of the Rwala encampment, and returned to her tent. At the side of this a small tent was already being put up, shut in from all sides, into which the young chief meant to bring his new bride after the wedding ceremony. This took place in the evening, the young couple entering the tent immediately afterwards. After midnight the chief returned to the big tent. All the next week his mien was dark, and the new wife did not show herself at all. After two weeks he gave her a severe beating and before the month was out divorced her because she scoffed at him in public and said that he was incapable of having intercourse with a woman; and as matter of fact she returned to her parents a virgin. The witch had caused the man to become impotent at the very moment when he approached the second woman, but reinvigorated him on his return to his first wife.

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THE EVIL EYE

The evil eye is universally feared among the Rwala. Every Rwejlî knows that there are persons of either sex who can cast a spell over him, yet he is never able to say who it was

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- 754 that has thus harmed him. A person having the evil eye is called *madri*, and the person he bewitches *ma'jûn*. A man who lacks both upper eyeteeth or one who has blue eyes is undoubtedly able to bewitch and is therefore carefully avoided by all his acquaintances. If a traveler is seen approaching his tent, he hears from all the neighboring tents: "Avoid the bewitcher's tent! Go to the right, to the right! *Lâ temarr 'ala bejt al-madri jeminak jeminak.*"

754 A bewitched person feels at once great weakness, his eyes
755 become dim, and he is subject to fainting fits. Above the heart of a bewitched child a blue spot soon appears, as if caused by a hard blow. A bewitched animal gets a tumor on the heart the size of a fist, and clotted blood is found under it when killed. Fumigation is the usual cure in such cases. If the bewitcher is known, two or three threads are torn from the hem of his garment and laid on red-hot coals, and the stricken person is fumigated with the smoke from them. The head of a bewitched animal is held over a dish of red-hot coals and smoldering *âih* plants in such a way that the smoke must enter its nostrils. Frequently the bewitched has much difficulty in urinating. To help him, the Bedouins shoot a porcupine, from which they extract the gall bladder and, pressing out its contents into a little water, *jemûsûn mrejhreh bel-moje*, they drip it into the nostrils of the sick person. Bewitched people and even animals are the most easily bitten by poisonous snakes.

754 Whoever is possessed of the evil eye also has the power to restore the bewitched to his former health. In the Ras-sâlin clan there lived at the time when these studies were made a fellow named Na"ûs eben 'Ajde to whose evil eye much misfortune was attributed. Once he bewitched, *zarab*, a young girl pretty both in face and figure, *hsejjene min ziddamah w-min warâha*. It happened while she was fetching water; when she returned to her tent, she began to stagger and finally fainted. On recovering she was unable to stand on her feet. When asked by her frightened mother the cause of her condition, the girl only said: "Na"ûs looked at me fixedly; he bewitched me," and fainted again, *ertamât min jedid*. With much lamentation the mother then reported to the father what the daughter had just told her, and he, calling his sons and relatives to his aid, ran to Na"ûs' tent, threatening him with death if he did not take back instantly the look which had injured his daughter. Na"ûs swore by all

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the powers that he had not bewitched any one on that day, but was seized by the enraged brothers of the girl and dragged to her bed where she was still lying unconscious. Na"ūs took his spittle, *rižeh*, in his three fingers, besmeared the girl's throat and neck with it, and then walked round her seven times, after which the girl awoke as healthy as before. This sudden recovery confirmed all the women there in the belief that Na"ūs' eye could bewitch, and they took counsel together as to how they could destroy this injurious power of their neighbor. Knowing or taking for granted that the eating of human excrement was the best remedy in this particular case, they appointed a woman whose tent adjoined that of Na"ūs to apply it to him. So she watched him till he went to fulfill the needs of nature, *jetahalla' bel-hala'*, took up some of his excrement, *neğaseh*, on a stalk, mixed it with flour, from which she then baked a thin loaf of bread, dipped it into melted butter, and inviting Na"ūs to dinner gave it to him to eat. Na"ūs, who was a frequent guest in his neighbor's tent, ate the bread and butter, praising its taste. From that time on no one complained of having been bewitched by him. His uncanny faculty had left him forever.

With some people the power of the evil eye is so strong that it can even bring down a bird from the air. Thus a troop of the Rwala were once riding through the desert. In one place they scared two birds called *habâri*, which flew up, then alighted, and rising again flew some distance in the direction followed by the riders. Finally Šabr âl Murabbat exclaimed: "Faith, we shall roast one of the birds; *wa' halôla jâ hada hal-habâri naštwiha.*" At the same moment one bird fell down to the ground as if struck by a bullet.

For protection against the evil eye small sea shells with red, white, and green spots, called *harazt an-nafs*, are recommended, also two marbles, *nekžên*. Both the shells and marbles can be bought from wandering merchants. If there are none in the neighborhood, the Bedouin selects seven pebbles, *samh hepwât*, pares off a splinter from the left (north) side pole of the tent, takes a grain of salt, *four melh*, and a small piece of alum, and sews all in a piece of new black cloth, *hebbe*. Still more effective is a fragment of a turtle shell, *'aṣm al-leṣa'*, fastened to a peg made of almond wood. Of the *nekžên* balls or marbles there must be always two, a black and a white one. The latter gives protection in the daytime,

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751 the former at night. Both are wrapped in pieces of soft skin,
754 *sihijâne*. Any of these preventives are tied to the head cord,
to the kerchief lappet, or to the belt. Little children carry
them fastened to their hair on the forehead, to their caps,
or hang them from their necks. The mares, which also must
be protected against the evil eye, have them twisted into their
forelocks or manes, or hung about their necks, while the camels
wear the charms in the tuft of hair growing on their humps.